

SNC Reference Number
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**SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY
Proposition 84 Grants Program
Pre-Application Form**

Date: Aug 4, 2008

Project: Riverside Whitewater Park in Kernville, CA

Applicant: Kern River Valley Council

Contact Person/email/phone:

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Amount Requested: \$100000

Total Project Cost: \$850000 – 1,000,000

Provide a general description of the project, including project goal, key actions or deliverables, and basic staffing and budget information:

Organizational Goals and Community Benefits:

Kern Valley River Council (KVRC), since our founding seven years ago, has built support and involvement through public education to preserve and enhance the quality of the Kern River and its environs, and to improve its economic, recreational and aesthetic values. Through a range of educational programs, facility construction, and regional competitive events, KVRC has promoted safer and healthy river activities which increase tourism and contribute to local businesses. Since its inception, KVRC has hosted numerous, regional, national, and international athletic events. In addition to promoting regional recreation in the Kern River corridor, each of these events has served to attract significant tourism to the area and thus serves as a boon to the local economy. Other overarching goals of KVRC's programs promote river safety, river quality and good stewardship of the river and the surrounding environment.

Purpose of Funds:

The Kern Valley River Council has proposed a project to rehabilitate and extend the recreational opportunities in and alongside Riverside Park in Kernville, California. Whitewater parks, like that proposed at Riverside Park, contribute notably to local economies when recreational users and tourists patronize local businesses. But, more importantly whitewater parks often are incorporated into larger river restoration projects aimed at enhancing the aesthetic, recreational, and ecological value of river corridors. The overall project consists four phases which include fishery habitat restoration, improved angler access, improvement of riparian vegetation, bank stabilization,

whitewater feature enhancement, riverside pedestrian trails, and interpretive or educational signage.

Riverside Park is a popular venue for local events and commonly used by anglers, picnickers, kayakers, rafters, and waders alike. However, over time seasonal flooding and human activity have altered the river features, deposited rip-rap, and eroded the bank. Additionally above ground irrigation pipes create potential drowning risk to park users; the proposed plan restores and improves upon the existing park. As such, the restoration project has gained broad approval from local community leaders and county officials.

Although parks of this nature have become common place in tourism-dependent states such as Colorado or Nevada, the environmental oversight requirements of California have inhibited development of this type of facility in the Sierra Nevada. This project found encouragement when Southern California Edison generously offered to provide a significant round of funding (currently under negotiation) as mitigation for the re-licensure of dams along the Kern River.

The Kern Valley River Council has retained the services of Whitewater Parks International to design and construct the park's streambed features, however, before this developer can proceed, monies must be obtained to finance the engineering/planning phase of the project. We perceive of four stages in this project:

Phase 1. Engineering: (estimated at \$95,000, 6 to 12 months)

Includes a formalized Master Plan and a detailed Facility Plan where the facilities are the components that comprise the Master Plan, for example, the whitewater features or habitat support structures. Since the project involves alteration of the riverbed, a significant portion of the Facility Design includes a variety of technical reports including but not limited to: revegetation plans, bank stabilization plans (soils management), biologist report, and hydrology report. Finally, the engineering phase includes a short-term construction plan and a long-term operational plan. Since we anticipate that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be required, the engineering firm will collaborate closely with the environmental and permitting consultant to insure that the deliverables streamline the CEQA approval process. The deliverables of the engineering phase become input to phase 2.

Phase 2. Environmental Documents (estimated \$350,000, 14 months):

The final product of this phase is an Environmental Impact Report. In preparation for the final EIR report numerous technical reports are generated discussing potential impacts to: air, noise, traffic, biological resources including fisheries, and hydrology. The EIR becomes input to phase 3.

Phase 3. Permits (estimated 50,000, 6 months):

The final products of this phase are permits from the Army Corps of Engineers - Clean Water Act 404 and California Department of Fish and Game - Streambed Alteration 1602. Additionally we anticipate discussion with the following agencies: US Fish and Wildlife, Bureau of Reclamation, Kern County Floodplain Management, Kern County Planning Commission, Regional Water Quality Board, California Department of Water Resources, and Kern County Parks and Recreation. Along with acquisition of permits, phase 3 also delivers construction level engineering and design documents which are required for phase 3.

Phase 4. Construction (estimated 350,000 to 500,000, 3 to 6 months):

Other Funding:

KVRC has applied to the Upper Kern Basin Fishery Resource Enhancement Trust for the habitat restoration aspects of the project. Awards will be announced in October; however the granting agency has expressed interest in supporting the project.

KVRC is negotiating with Southern California Edison for initial funding of the Kernville Whitewater Park project. Final determination is expected within the calendar year.

The project has been presented and well received by the local business community, including the Kernville Chamber of Commerce and the Kern River Valley Revitalization task force. Numerous offers of in-kind donations have been offered.

Basic Staffing:

KVRC plans to contract with Northcutt and Associates for CEQA compliance activities and permitting. Whitewater Parks International will provide all engineering work and manage construction activities. The members of KVRC's board and volunteer possess a number of required skills including: executive level fundraising expert, certified public accountant, grant writer, lawyers, business owners, consulting hydrologists, consulting biologists, school board members, and whitewater slalom Olympians.

KVRC has had preliminary consultations with Northcutt and Associates who specialize in planning and environmental consulting and Whitewater Parks International. The funds contributed by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy will allow KVRC to formalize these relationships and procure the phase 1 deliverables.